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Richmond's Daily Dispatch

THE DAILY DISPATCH PUBLISHED IN THE TIMES-DISPATCH

WHOLE NUMBER 670

RICHMOND, VA., SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1905.

PRICE FIVE CENTS

NOTABLE NEW-YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS THAT MIGHT BE MADE.



INDICTS SENATOR AND CONGRESSMAN

Charges Mitchell and Hermann with Conspiracy.

INVOLVED IN LAND FRAUD CASE

Deputy Sheriff Also in Tolls, President Orders That District Attorney Be Removed From Office—Allegations Included in Indictment.

(By Associated Press)

PORLAND, ORE., December 31.—United States Senator John H. Mitchell, Representative in Congress Binger Hermann and George Sorenson, formerly a deputy sheriff of Multnomah county, were jointly indicted to-day by the Federal grand jury.

The indictment alleges that John H. Mitchell and Binger Hermann did in January, 1903, unlawfully and feloniously conspire together, and with S. A. D. Puter Horace G. McKinley, N. W. Tarpley, Emma Watson, Salmon H. Ormsby, Clark E. Loomis, William H. Davis and others, to defraud the government of its United States out of a portion of its public lands, situated in township 11, south range, 7 east, by means of forged and false affidavits and fictitious persons, and that in the furtherance of their conspiracy S. A. D. Puter did, on March 9, 1902, pay to John H. Mitchell, the sum of \$2,000, to secure his influence with Binger Hermann, then commissioner of the general land office at Washington, the general and land office at Washington.

Improper Use of Office.

It alleges that, acting upon the suggestion and the wish of Senator Mitchell, and induced by him knowing that the transactions were unlawful and felonious, Hermann used his power as commissioner of the general land office to expedite twelve claims in township 12, 7, and had them passed to patent when he knew them to be illegal and not according to the requirements of the law. The indictment also alleges that on March 23, 1902, George Sorenson offered to John H. Hall, district attorney for the U. S. in Oregon, the sum of \$6,000, with intent to induce him in his official capacity when acting on the documents, returned to him against S. A. D. Puter, Horace G. McKinley and others, to defraud the government of its land.

In 1902, the government alleges, Puter while at Washington on business, connected with the lands in which he was at that time interested. Arriving at Washington, Puter went to the office of Senator Mitchell and conversed with him in regard to having his claims taken from the suspended list and put through to patent as soon as possible. It was necessary for him to have some influence with the commissioner of the general land office to secure favorable recognition of his claims and he therefore wanted the help of Senator Mitchell. The government alleges that Puter went to see Binger Hermann, then commissioner of the general land office, and talked the matter over with him. As a result, the famous Puter Watson affidavit was made, giving to the government, when it was made. It is alleged that Senator Mitchell dictated the paper to his stenographer and had them delivered to Puter as finished. The affidavits, it is alleged, were taken to Mr. Hermann. On March 8, 1902, the government alleges, Mr. Hermann wrote a letter to Senator Mitchell, stating that he had expedited the claims as per his request.

HALL REMOVED.

President Directs That District Attorney be Relieved of Office.

(By Associated Press)

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 31.—President Roosevelt today directed the removal from office of John H. Hall, United States district attorney for Oregon. Mr. Hall has been prosecuting officer of the government in the land fraud cases, and the removal is made in connection with them. Mr. Hall was endorsed for reappointment by Senator Mitchell and Representative Hermann, of Oregon, both of whom recently went to Portland, where they appeared before the grand jury in connection with that body's consideration of the cases growing out of the public land frauds. The President took no action on this recommendation. The conduct of the district attorney's office at Portland has been criticized by many representatives and papers on the fact adduced have been transmitted here. The representatives alleged that there has been obstruction of justice, that certain prominent men have been shielded, giving evidence in the land fraud cases.

Oliver E. Magie, of Chicago, special assistant attorney of the Department of

Justice, has been sent to Oregon to assist in the prosecution of the land fraud cases.

BIG FIRE IN CHICAGO DOES \$600,000 DAMAGE

CHICAGO, ILL., Dec. 31.—A fire which destroyed \$600,000 worth of property on West Van Buren Street to-day started in the second floor of the seven-story brick building occupied by the Cash Buyers Union. The building was entirely destroyed.

With a detonation that was heard far around, an explosion in the basement of the building tore up the stairs and sides, and started a fire running into the air and tearing live wires of the Van Buren Street electric car line down. One of the firemen was severely injured. Crashing down through the frail walls of the structure adjoining, the towering walls of the Peninsula Stove Company and those of the Cash Buyers' Union tottered and collapsed. A series of small explosions followed the fall of all the walls.

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